



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service  
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C Lakewood, Colorado 80215  
Phone (720) 544-2808 • Fax (720) 544-2965 • [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov)

---

Petra Barnes Walker, Public Information Officer  
720-544-2808

## Nationwide CSP Sign up Begins April 18<sup>th</sup>

*Lakewood, CO, March 24, 2008*—Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer recently announced a sign-up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will begin accepting applications for enrollment into the program starting April 18, 2008 and continue through May 16, 2008 nationwide. The Upper Arkansas-John Martin Reservoir has been designated as Colorado's only CSP watershed for this 2008 sign up. 50 additional watersheds have been designated nationwide. For eligibility and enrollment requirements, landowners within the Upper Arkansas-John Martin Reservoir watershed are encouraged to visit [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/CSP2008/CSP2008.html](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/CSP2008/CSP2008.html).

CSP is a program that allows the US Department of Agriculture to reward farmers and ranchers for the sound conservation work they have been doing over the past years. *"Since the first sign-up in 2004, CSP has offered payments for enhancing natural resources, rewarding farmers and ranchers who are model conservationists, and providing incentives for other producers to achieve the high standards of conservation in agriculture,"* said Schafer.

The Upper Arkansas-John Martin Reservoir CSP Watershed is located in the southeastern portion of the State and encompasses portions of eight counties and a small portion of Kansas (*please see map below*). Colorado counties include Lincoln, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Crowley, Bent, Prowers, Baca, and Las Animas. The entire watershed covers nearly 2.5 million acres and will be available to an estimated 846 eligible farms in Colorado totaling some 1.9 million acres.

*"Sign-up for this program has been highly anticipated within this watershed,"* said Dollie Gonzales, NRCS Resource Conservationist, Lakewood, CO. *"We are pleased to finally see it come to fruition and have an opportunity to get some deserving people rewarded as well as encourage others to enhance their commitment to conservation."*

CSP provides payments to those landowners who are already applying conservation practices on their land. It works with landowners to reward them for their good past efforts and provides incentives to move to next level of natural resource conservation.

Payments can include three components: 1) an annual stewardship component for the base level of conservation treatment; 2) an annual component for maintenance of existing conservation practices; and 3) an enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort. Enhancement activities could include limited pesticide applications, renewable energy generation, and widening existing riparian forest buffers for restoring critical stream habitat.

**-more-**

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

To help determine basic eligibility for CSP, NRCS first recommends potential participants to complete a CSP self-assessment available at: [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/CSP2008/CSP2008.html](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/CSP2008/CSP2008.html). *“The self-assessment process is a tool we use within NRCS but it’s also a great tool for any landowners to have at any time,”* Gonzales goes on to say. *“Upon completion, the landowners will have a comprehensive inventory of their natural resources as well as an outline of their current and desired conditions.”*

Upon completing the assessment, the producer submits the CSP workbook to the local NRCS or Conservation District field office during the sign-up period and meets with NRCS personnel to go over any additional needed documentation. NRCS will then determine if eligibility requirements are met and provide options for the producer's decision on enrollment category placement.

For additional information regarding CSP, or to obtain a hard copy of the CSP self assessment workbook, please visit your local NRCS or Conservation District field office located in the USDA Service Center that services your county.

-end-

